PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Workers of the World Unite on May Day



ITALY



TURKEY



BANGLADESH



GERMANY



BROOKLYN



WASHINGTON, DC

OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✯Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

From Ukraine to Iraq...

Imperialists Plot for War

Millions of workers worldwide celebrated May Day 2014, the international working-class holiday rooted in the earliest fights for communism more than a century ago. The Progressive Labor Party is carrying forward this tradition in more than twenty countries on five continents. Despite the bosses' efforts to bury this tradition in a wave of nationalism and imperialism, millions of 2014 May Day marchers advanced their anti-capitalist demands. They showed the potential of the working class to organize for communist revolution.

War Is 'Good' — For the Bosses

Meanwhile, the bosses are urgently proclaiming that war is good. On April 25, the ultra-imperialist Washington Post printed an op-ed piece headlined, "In the Long Run, Wars Make Us Safer and Richer." Through ten thousand years of conflict, the piece read, "humanity has created larger, more organized societies that have greatly reduced the risk that their members will die violently. These better organized societies also have created the conditions for higher living standards and economic growth. War has not only made us safer, but richer, too."

But who is "us"? The group enriching itself through war is the tiny, profiteering capitalist class, not the billions now struggling to survive on one to two dollars a day. And who is safer? Not the tens of millions who died in World War I. Not the more than 100 million who died in World War II. Not the tens of millions more slaughtered in the imperialists' proxy wars since 1945.

Rulers Go Nuclear?

The ruling class's war mongering is most apparent in the spiking tension between Washington and Moscow in Ukraine and beyond. Pro-Russian forces are widening the combat zone against the U.S.-backed government in Kiev. U.S. troops are positioned to defend what may be Putin's next targets in the Baltic region — and to set a "trip wire" for a potential nuclear war, Barack Obama's high-stakes revival of NATO's mid-20th-century Cold War doctrine (see CHALLENGE, 4/7).

During the Cold War (1947-1991), the U.S. stationed hundreds of thousands of troops at the edge of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence in Europe. Any conflict could have been used to justify massive U.S. retaliation. Today Obama is taking a similar tack against the Russian imperialists among the U.S. rulers' leading rivals for profits. On April 26, Lithuania President Dalia Grybauskaite rehearsed the trip-wire scenario by greeting 150 U.S. paratroopers: "The numbers are not important. If just one of our guests is harmed, this would mean an open confrontation, not with Lithuania but with the United States of America" (Reuters, 4/26/14).

On May 2, according to the New York Times, "46 people died as a result of street battles between pro-Russia and pro-Ukraine groups....in Odessa, far west of the country's restive eastern region." As the leading mouthpiece for the U.S. ruling class, the Times worried that this violence was "a measure of how far events have spiraled out of the authorities' control." CNN (5/4/14) chimed in, "This unrest raises the prospect of Russia becoming even more involved, whether that involves taking over all or parts of the region peacefully as it did with Crimea or as part of a full-scale military conflict."

Losing influence in the Ukraine — a conduit for Russia's oil and gas pipeline to the west — terrifies U.S. bosses. So does Putin's threat to "liberate" ethnic Russians by taking over other former Soviet bloc countries. Unlike Ukraine, these nations now belong to U.S.-led NATO, making the stakes even higher (For the origin and role of NATO, see CHALLENGE, 4/7.)

Oil War Heating Up

U.S. and Russian capitalists are also squaring off in the Middle East. According to a May 1 article published by the BBC, "Iraq: A Proxy Battleground in a Regional War," "sectarian" killings have tripled over the past year. The BBC attributed this escalation to a struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia for supremacy in the Gulf: "Shia officials openly accuse Saudi Arabia of financing Sunni extremists in the region, whereas Iraqi Sunnis often accuse the government of Nouri al-Maliki of power-grabbing to help Iran advance its regional agenda."

But this is only the surface of the story. Behind Saudi royals and Iranian ayatollahs is the competition between ExxonMobil and Russia's Lukoil to dominate Iraqi oil supplies. Exxon's transactions with Saudi Arabia represent the biggest deals in the history of capitalism. So it is no surprise that the all-time biggest arms sale, now under way, links Washington and the Saudi rulers. On the other hand, "Iran's current leaders are feeling increasingly comfortable with President Vladimir V. Putin's anti-American and anti-Western stances," as reflected in a recent Russia-Iran $10-billion energy deal (NYT, 4/29/14).

Iraq's warring sect leaders, bankrolled by Saudis and Iranians, have their own oil-fueled agendas, from jobs patronage to revenue sharing. But the imperialist forces backing them are locked in a larger fight for a much bigger prize.

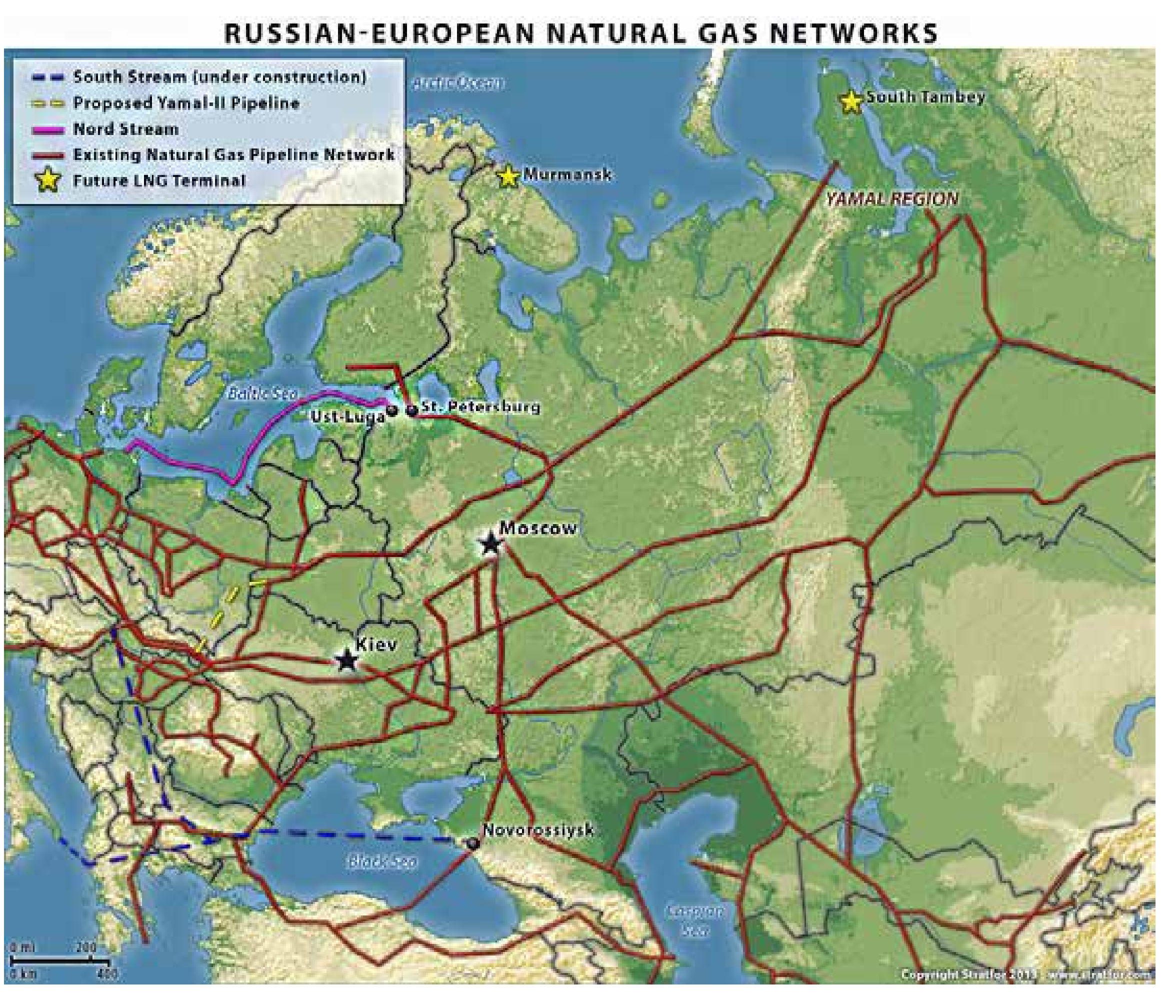
> *In mid-March, Russian oil giant Lukoil celebrated the start up of the West Qurna-2. The Iraqi oilfield...was quite likely the world's biggest untapped field, with recoverable oil reserves believed to be in the neighborhood of 20 billion barrels"* (Forbes, 5/3/14).

The Victims: Five Million Iraqis

Russia's oil barons have made this critical inroad without firing a shot in either U.S.-led war on Iraq. But Maliki's coziness with Iran and Russia is driving Exxon — for whose benefit four U.S. presidents displaced or killed five million Iraqis — to destabilize his regime. To the consternation of both Maliki and Putin, Exxon is defying Baghdad's dictates by drilling and exporting crude from Iraq's renegade Kurdish region.

As U.S. rulers seek continued control of Middle East oil to keep rival imperialists in check, they are also accelerating

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Cuomo-de Blasio Racist Transit Contract Taking Workers for A Ride

NEW YORK CITY, May 5 — Workers here are under attack. Masses of city employees are slaving away under expired union contracts. The principle of "No contract, No work" — meaning if workers hadn't won their demands when their contract expired, they would strike — now seems like ancient history. Gone is the militant, communist leadership that once steered NYC unions towards challenging capitalists' constant drive to maximize profits off our backs. Instead we have union mis-leaders telling workers for years to hold on for a new, "better" mayor. Recent events have shown that putting faith in union hacks and politicians will get us nowhere!

On April 17, transit workers found they were among the first to be sold out. A deal struck between Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 mis-leaders and NY State Governor Cuomo "The Cutter" raises the cost of workers' health insurance, lengthens wage-progression to five years (up from three) and only grants pay raises that are really cuts because they're below inflation. It provides the bosses and their lackeys years of "labor peace" with a five-year contract (also up from three).

This is a racist contract which attacks a mainly black, Latino, Asian and immigrant workforce, and is especially bad for those newly hired who are even more predominately from those groups. Since it will take even longer to get to top pay, the contract will encourage hire-and-fire attacks (especially in already unstable jobs like bus drivers). However, this racist sellout will affect all new transit workers, will further divide the new from the old and thereby weaken all.

While Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) unions bargain with the State, the amount that 38,000 TWU Local 100 members earn sets a pattern in the city for all workers, especially other MTA workers who are in Amalgamated Transit Union locals. This is clear from the April 30 deal announced by Bill "Cutbacks" deBlasio and the United Federation of Teachers. The sexist teachers' contract, which attacks a mainly female workforce, allows for nearly the exact same pay raises that fail to match inflation and represents a longer-than-usual contract.

To be clear, gross totals of inflation for 2012 and 2013 were 3 percent, while pay raises were only 2 percent. New York workers are well aware of this, especially thanks to the Rent Guidelines Board, which has jacked up rents 5.25-7.25 percent in those years!

The cuts in real pay and benefits in store for the rest of the city's workers could be even worse. Much of this stems from the fact that while the bosses steal trillions of dollars from public and private sector workers' labor, they spend these monies on imperialist wars. Capitalist politicians are professional liars when in comes to blaming one another for lack of funding for schools, transit and healthcare that workers need.

As workers we need the PLP to grow, to become strong enough to lead workers, students and soldiers away from not only the bosses' politicians but also from the treadmill of reforms. While it's good to fight to make workers lives better now, capitalism operates to take away what meager gains we win through higher taxes, mass racist unemployment, two-tier wage systems and outright wage-cuts. That's why learning to fight the bosses is even more important, so we can ultimately overthrow the capitalist class and take power for ourselves. A communist system could meet all workers' needs, destroy racism and sexism, homelessness, imperialist war and wage slavery.✪



Skikda, Algeria — May Day march of striking petrochemical plant workers and their children.

Reject Racist Anti-student Contract

NEW YORK CITY, May 5 — The UCLA Civil Rights Project just named New York as the state with the most segregated school system in the U.S., with New York City leading the way.

Racist disparities between students of the same age show us each day how unequal our society is. An Annenberg Foundation report of September 2012 found that in black and Latino neighborhoods only 10% of students graduate "college ready."

The current contract proposal for NYC teachers is — like those before it — a contract ON the mainly black and Latino youth of the NYC school system. The offer of $5,000 to teach in "hard-to-staff" (read black and Latino) schools is a capitulation to racist segregation, to the notion that separate can be made more equal. Teachers must reject this contract because separate can never be made equal.

This contract ought to be rejected also because it contains increased avenues for the Department of Education and principals to sow division among teachers by offering merit pay. If this contract passes, a small number of teachers will be anointed as ones with the responsibility for coming up with new and sustaining effective teaching practices.

Teachers must reject this contract because our union refuses to fight for a reduction in class size. Yes, it is true the raises are paltry and don't even keep up with inflation. However, that is not the reason to vote this contract down. We should vote no because we need to send a strong message that we stand in solidarity with the interests of our students. The 2012 teachers strike in Chicago had mass support because the teachers were demanding better conditions for everyone in the schools, not just money for themselves. This kind of working-class solidarity is necessary but not sufficient to bring about the changes we need, which can only be satisfied by communist revolution.

We ought to use this contract vote to truly examine our priorities as educators. Good teachers do not show up to work every day merely for the money, but because we care about equality for the students.

Capitalism wreaks havoc on the lives of our students and it is a never-ending struggle to teach well. The only way out is to band together with students and their families to fight the bosses' racist, segregated school system. In this fight we tie ourselves to a long tradition of struggle, a tradition that has given birth to revolutionaries committed to the fight for communism. From each day on the job, to local strikes to general strikes to insurrection to the seizure of power, the banner of the struggle for an education our students deserve is emblazoned with the slogan: FIGHT TO LEARN, LEARN TO FIGHT.✪

Imperialists Plot for War

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their campaign to guarantee domestic energy supplies against the growing probability of trans-oceanic wars. The imperialist Brookings Institution think tank praises the U.S. energy industry's foresight "as it consumes more home-produced oil and turns to sources of supply from its own backyards, notably from Canada, Venezuela and Mexico. Brazilian supplies, which are estimated to be among the world's largest, could dramatically reinforce this trend" ("Fueling a New Disorder? The New Geopolitical and Security Consequences of Energy," Brookings, March 2014).

In addition, "the federal government will build its first gasoline storage reserves in the New York Harbor area and in New England. Together, the reserves will hold about a million barrels of gasoline.... the fuel is intended to be held back in case another disaster cripples regional fuel supplies." This is code for the contingency of a global inter-imperialist conflict.

Workers' Trump Card: Fight for Communism

The bosses' crucial obstacle is the refusal of the international working class to serve as cannon fodder in the rulers' next bloodbath. Today, workers in Ukraine and Russia are of central importance. But our resistance must include workers on every continent, workers who are already fighting back against the ravages of capitalism. Class struggle is raging worldwide, from workers in China striking against their Nike exploiters, to garment workers in Bangladesh fighting the bosses' deathtraps, to workers in France, Spain and Greece opposing international capitalism's imposition of austerity programs, to students and workers in Haiti refusing to accept the fascism inflicted on them by U.S. rulers and their local lackeys, to the slum dwellers in Brazil defending their homes in battles with the cops, to students, teachers and workers in U.S. cities standing up to the racist attacks in their schools and workplaces — all this indicates the working class will not accept the ruling class's assault lying down and will continue to rebel against the latter's onslaught.

The inter-imperialist conflict must be transformed into a class war against the bosses' system. Capitalism must be overthrown and replaced with a communist society — of, by and for the working class.

Indispensable to that goal is the leadership and growth of the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party. As communists, we must dedicate ourselves to lead the world's workers to bury the profit system, the cause of all the problems suffered by our class. Join us!✪

May Day: Spread PL's Red Flag…

HAITI

HAITI, May 1 — On May Day, comrades joined the May Day march with more than 1,000 participants: workers, teachers and students. We distributed hundreds of flyers and led chants.

The march started at the SONAPI (free trade zone industrial park) and wound its way to the Champs de Mars, a large public park in front of the National Palace where tens of thousands of workers lived in tents for more than two years after the 2010 earthquake.

The police attacked the march and one marcher was punched in the eye and two students were arrested. One, a close friend, was beaten in the police precinct. In response, students at the Faculté d'Ethnologie organized a two-day strike on campus demanding their release; there were also several days of street demonstrations, which were attacked by the cops.

Other comrades participated in a speak-out of garment workers, a way to share the daily misery experienced by workers and to press for their demands for an increase in the minimum wage.

In the countryside, a comrade organized a meeting on May Day with 20 farm workers, led by one who is close to Our party. Later in the town's public square, we showed a documentary film with more than 500 people. There was a lively discussion afterwards, in which communist ideas and our Party was discussed. In another town, a comrade organized a May Day rally and is engaged with other residents of the area in a struggle to take over for public use certain infrastructures left by an NGO.✪



WASHINGTON, DC

WASHINGTON, DC, May 1 — Today 150 marchers gathered at Malcolm X Park to celebrate May Day and reaffirm their determination to fight back on all fronts against racism and capitalism.

One speaker, formerly imprisoned, described the racist horror of mass incarceration and how background checks, even after someone's release, makes it impossible to find a job and support yourself. A Metro bus driver called on workers to unite against racism and sexism everywhere as part of the revolutionary struggle, and noted a small victory against racist background checks at Metro.

Another noted the recent successful unionization of adjunct teachers at two local universities. A tenant organizer called on everyone to come to a city-wide tenant organizing meeting as part of the battle against racist displacement through gentrification. A PL'er described the modern-day racist offensive of mass incarceration and mass deportation, and how only by building a revolutionary party, not limited to reform efforts, could we hope to succeed in the long run.

With PLP red flags snapping in the breeze and our bold May Day banner at its front, the march surged down 14th Street to the White House, with over 300 copies of CHALLENGE distributed to workers who saw the march pass by. At the White House, we observed a handful of racists who had gathered to oppose the May Day march, completely protected by a phalanx of cops and a metal barricade to defend them from angry protesters. They remembered how the racists were clobbered the year before by May Day marchers! Finally, the police loaded the racists into a police van and drove away — another example of cop-Klan solidarity with racists.

The day ended with bold speeches against the backdrop of the bosses' White House, condemning the politicians and the capitalists for their imperialist wars, their racist attacks, and their destruction of the environment, and with a pledge to redouble our efforts in the coming year to smash capitalism!✪

NEWARK



NEWARK, NJ May 1— On this May Day, more workers worldwide are fighting the capitalists' mass layoffs, cutbacks due to government austerity, and police terror. PLP's idea that nothing short of communist revolution can ever change the fundamental reality of capitalist exploitation, racism and sexism needs to emerge from these struggles. Some workers here are beginning to examine this idea. Their actions reflect a break from the idea that the bosses' election circus can help our class.

Today, 75 people, including about 25 legal services workers, family members and clients, along with community and union militants, marched against the continued underfunding of free legal services for unemployed and low-wage workers; continued cuts in unemployment benefits and Food Stamps; mass racist unemployment and for jobs; and in solidarity with public school workers and students facing the ax of state-appointed Superintendent Cami Anderson's school closing plan.

'Jobs, Yes. Racism, No — Food Stamp Cuts have Got to Go!'

Chants of "Same struggle, same fight, workers of the world unite," "Whose day, Our day, What day? May Day," and "Jobs yes, racism no. Food Stamp cuts have got to go" were heard in downtown Newark.

Over 150 CHALLENGE newspapers were distributed. This march was a major organizing effort for local legal services workers, and included a healthy battle over ideas.

After a Nov. 1 march against budget cuts, legal services workers here initiated a War Against Poverty Coalition (WAPC). We reached out to unions, community and neighborhood groups, teachers, students, and service providers for homeless people. In February, the WAPC decided to organize today's march with two demands: jobs at living wages, and restore cuts to the safety net. A demand to stop attacks on public school students, parents and teachers was added.

A sharp debate took place within the WAPC over whether politicians who said they supported the demands of the march should be allowed to speak on May Day. Some honestly believed that having the politicians on our side will help win our demands. They also didn't see a viable alternative to voting as a way to change the system. Opponents strongly argued that, no matter who the individual politician is, their role is to serve the current masters of society, the ruling class. They also said that any politician who speaks will use that opportunity for their own narrow political purpose — getting elected.

The Coalition decided to only recognize those politicians who supported the demands of the march, but to not allow them to speak. Because there are hotly-contested May 13 mayoral and city council elections, various Democratic Party candidates or staffers contacted the Coalition and unsuccessfully tried to worm their way on to the speakers' list. However, WAPC stuck to its position.

The legal services worker who spoke for WAPC linked the cutbacks to war preparations. She said U.S. bosses "are trying to use us as mere pawns in their war games in their battle for supremacy against other international imperialists around the globe" and said that we should fight back instead of allowing these same bosses to place us "in a Hunger Games Arena."

The community fighter stated it was not enough to fight for reforms; that we must also fight for revolution to change the economic and political system that workers live under. However, he hoped such a revolution would not require violent struggle. He invoked Martin Luther King's pacifism and Frederick Douglass's call to action against slavery.

Only Armed Struggle Can Topple the Bosses

PLP says there can't be a peaceful revolution to get rid of capitalism. For centuries, oppressed people who rose up against their masters, kings and bosses to change conditions were violently suppressed by these same rulers. The struggle to abolish chattel slavery in the U.S., which did not end all forms of exploitation here, only came through armed struggle against the armies of the plantation owners. As Marx said, "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one." It has taken many lost lives and broken spirits for class-conscious workers to realize that neither the election of "progressive" candidates, or a mass reform movement, or both, can break the power of any boss-run government.

The final rally ended with the singing of the Internationale, a song written by a transport worker who fled the Paris Commune (an uprising of workers that led to the first worker-run government in the world) in 1871 to escape the slaughter of 30,000 Communards by the army of the French capitalists. One worker was inspired and asked for words to that song. As we move to the next stage in this struggle against capitalism, we are a step closer to the "better world in birth" that PLP is fighting for.✪

...From U.S. to Palestine to Haiti

BROOKLYN



BROOKLYN, April 26 — Another May Day, another opportunity to fight for revolution! After a year of explosive struggles, from Latin America to East Africa, as well as local fightbacks against General David Petraeus and the racist DC Metro, it becomes easy to get lost in reform. Distributing thousands of flyers and CHALLENGEs, and a special edition of Le Défi in French and Kreole, urging people to fight back against this or that person, or change this or that policy, May Day reminds us what we are here to do: overthrow capitalism! May Day commemorates the actions of valiant workers in the Paris Commune 1871, Chicago 1886, Russia 1917, China 1949. It commemorates the struggle against capitalism, against racism and sexism; the struggle for communism. May Day reminds us that we come from a long history of struggle, and that we must struggle to win!

We began at Parkside and Ocean Avenues, the middle of a very working-class black, Latino, and immigrant neighborhood. As we called for the destruction of the profit system with a sound truck leading us, our march kept swelling. Comrades from around New York City, Chicago, DC, Boston and Baltimore joined us.

'Koupe Tet, Boule Kaye'

Our call for communism was made in English, Spanish and Creole, reflecting the international nature of PLP. One chant, "Koupe Tet, Boule Kaye" was particularly significant because it got straight to the point. It translates into "Cut off their heads, burn their houses!" and was an order given by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a leader of the Haitian Revolution, to his army of former slaves. It reflects the attitude that we must have towards our class enemy. This anger is only an appropriate response to generations of genocide, rape, murder and exploitation our class brothers and sisters. It is with this steely determination that we must fight for communism!

As we marched along Flatbush Avenue, now over 500 strong, people began to take notice. Whether they were in barbershops, restaurants, hairdressers, or bodegas, workers took notice. They raised their fists in salute and chanted with us. Thousands of CHALLENGEs were taken by youngsters and grandmothers, black and white workers, women and men.

Next, a new part of our May Day celebration commenced in the assembly hall. We held our first May Day gallery walk! It consisted of three stations: anti-racism; anti-sexism; anti-imperialism. All the performances, skits, and talks reflected working-class culture. Between each station, there were loads of artwork and PLP literature available for donations. The gallery allowed comrades to experience history, to capture history, and to make history.

Cultural Revolution Changed People's Lives

After the gallery, we had a short centralized program. A comrade from China recounted his experiences living under the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The spread of the people's communes decidedly changed the way people lived their lives. Instead of this rancid capitalist competition, there was genuine human collectivity. This is the goal of a communist revolution, and this is the goal of PLP!

Next came the keynote speech. It began with a report of all the struggles, international and local, that have been led this year. As our comrade said: "we need to do more than to know the bosses' fatal weaknesses; we need to act on them!" Capitalism cannot provide a job, a home or food for everyone. But communism is more than just those material things. Communism is the chance for "real freedom, real justice and real dignity" (see front page CHALLENGE, 5/7). For that, we need to keep growing PLP, keep fighting and keep struggling!

Lastly, there was the "Why I Joined PLP" speech, which reminded every comrade, young and old, of the commitment they made and why they made it. He described his parents' struggles living on paycheck to paycheck, on the verge of homelessness. How his parents blamed themselves for failing. How the schools were determined to keep him obedient, to hate his class and trust the police (see speech next issue). "And one year ago today ,I did become something that made me happy. I became a communist, and joined the struggle with my working class brothers and sisters." All over the world, workers are seeking this very confidence, this revolutionary optimism. Let us fight for a communist world! Long live communism, power to the workers!✪

SAN FRANCISCO



SAN FRANCISCO, May 1 — PLP here planned two events to celebrate May Day: a Backyard BBQ and a contingent in the May 1 Oakland Sin Fronteras (No Borders) Coalition.

Workers Struggles Have No Borders

As we marched alongside our sisters and brothers to celebrate May Day we chanted in Spanish and English "Obreras unidos jamas seran vencidos," "The workers united can never be defeated" and "Fight for Communism, Power to the workers," Primero de Mayo, Communista y Proletario."

We traded chants with other groups about international solidarity and multiracial unity. Some from other groups joined us in our call for communist revolution.

A multiracial, international, and multi-generational crowd of over 60 gathered to socialize and celebrate May Day. It was a wide circle of friends, comrades, neighbors, family, coworkers, retirees, and friends of friends.

A short speech discussed lessons PLP has drawn from the world communist movement and the rise of a police state. One main point was that under President Obama, "the deporter-in-chief", a police state apparatus has deported more than two million undocumented workers. The racist USA has the biggest incarcerated population in the world, mostly black and Latino workers and youth.

This May Day shows the potential for international workers' unity to grow since workers from every continent were present. PLP members' active participation in the schools, on the job and in community groups can help move the agenda towards developing class consciousness: we are all in one huge, international working class. We think these are small steps to building a mass communist party and movement among workers of the world. The International working class can become a tornado to destroy capitalism.✪

TEL-AVIV

TEL-AVIV, May 1 — Hundreds of workers and activists marched in central Tel-Aviv with red flags and banners, some decorated with the hammer and sickle, the traditional communist symbol of industrial and farm workers' unity. We, the PL'ers in Israel-Palestine, all came to this march, with our red shirts, as well as the local leaflet "Why Communism?"

While the May Day march was organized by the thoroughly pseudo-leftist "Communist" Party of Israel, as well as the usual liberals, many radicalized and militant youth and workers came as well. One demonstrator, who was dressed in a WWII-era Red Army uniform, upon seeing our leaflet told us that he supports the way of Stalin and Mao! Another young worker from the "C"P Youth, told us he stands against the CP leadership and supports what was written in our leaflet.

The main call of the march was for a 30 ILS ($8.5) hourly minimum wage, instead of the current 25 ILS ($7), which is now the main campaign of the reformists. This is an important struggle, as one cannot make a living out of a minimum wage even when working full-time. But we must ask — would asking for a few more crumbs off the bosses' table change the essential nature of the working class's exploitation by the tycoons?

What we need to fight for is not a few more scraps of bread, but the whole bakery. This is why we openly call for communist revolution.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Rulers Allow Racist Murderer to Roam Free

When white racist Frazier Glenn Miller murdered three innocent people in Overland Park, Kansas, on April 13 the media generally described him as a "mad, lone-wolf gunman," but he was anything but. While the ruling class spends millions spying on innocent Muslims, infiltrating Mosques, moving against participants in the Occupy Wall Street movement, setting up police Red Squads to attack communists in PLP and placing tens of thousands on no-fly lists, somehow they missed racist Miller. But with Miller's history, he would be hard to miss.

According to Kathleen Belew, a history fellow at Northwestern University, writing in the New York Times (4/16), Miller was "a central figure of the white power movement…outspoken about his hatred of Jews, blacks, Communists and immigrants." That movement "forged…strongholds not only in the South, but also in the Pacific Northwest, Colorado, California and Pennsylvania."

Miller served 20 years in the Army, including as a Green Beret, and in 1979 "took part…in a deadly shooting of Communist protesters in Greensboro, N.C." The next year "Miller formed a Klan-affiliated organization in North Carolina…known as the White Patriot Party…. paraded his neo-Nazis, in uniform and bearing arms, up and down streets….[and] also burned crosses. By 1986, Miller's group claimed 2,500 members in five southern states."

Miller "received large sums of money from…a white power group in the Pacific Northwest to buy land and weapons to put his followers through paramilitary training….[and] paid $50,000 for weapons and materials stolen from the armory at Fort Bragg, N.C., including anti-tank rockets, mines and plastic explosives…."

"The leaders have robbed armored cars, engaged in counterfeiting and the large-scale theft of military weapons and carried out or planned killings." Yet somehow the FBI, Homeland Security, big-city police departments spying on Muslims and anti-war protesters and the State Police never went after Miller and his racist, fascist movement. Of course, now they are forced to prosecute him for his recent open murders in Kansas.

Obviously Miller was no "mad, lone-wolf gunman" but rather a neo-Nazi/Klan/white supremacist organizer of hundreds, if not thousands in his racist movement. Imagine if some Muslims or Black Panthers or communists had been organizing paramilitary training using anti-tank rockets, mines and plastic explosives! The bosses' state apparatus would have come down on them like a ton of bricks. But somehow Miller "fell through the cracks."

Is there any doubt that the ruling class will look the other way and allow — if not encourage — neo-Nazis like Miller to roam free to spread their racist filth while going all-out to attack, prosecute and jail opponents of their system?

Old-time Red

MAY DAY 2014

GERMANY



Anti-Nazi demonstrators in Rostock.
Banner reads "May Day Free of Nazis. Pluralism Instead of Fascism."

BROOKLYN



Heroin: Bosses' Medicine for Capitalism's Misery

On top of the myriad of problems this crisis-ridden capitalist society breeds, there's now a heroin epidemic, and it's not confined to distressed cities like Detroit. In fact, it has spread to the coalfields of Western Pennsylvania. On May 2, according to a Johnstown news story, a dozen people overdosed on heroin in 72 hours in the Johnstown area. Considering the relatively small population, that's a lot of people, and didn't include the number of people who used heroin but didn't overdose.

Counselors and doctors were interviewed and gave their views on what was wrong. However, none mentioned the fact that the Johnstown area is severely economically depressed. When the mines closed and the steel mills shut down, this area went into a tailspin and today there are hardly any decent-paying jobs. Actually, there are barely any jobs of any sort and there is a growing number of permanently unemployed.

The existence of a heroin epidemic is certainly no surprise, given that desperation is rampant and people are searching for an escape from all the crap the system is throwing at them on a daily basis. Also, it's not surprising that the crime rate is rising. People's backs are against the wall and some respond by robbing a bank (which is infinitely less criminal than the billions the bosses steal from workers in profits made off our labor).

Of course, the capitalist ruling class would rather see people using heroin than developing class consciousness, let alone communist consciousness. Capitalism has nothing meaningful to offer workers, and some, faced with this hopelessness, unfortunately become drug addicts.

Only a communist future can free the workers from this dark night and usher in a society where the workers will rule and there will be decent and meaningful jobs for all. If a worker might fall and for some reason begin to use drugs, every attempt would be made to rehabilitate this person and find a place for him or her in the communist system.

PLP is working to win workers to communism when such afflictions as heroin abuse will become things of the past.

Red Coal

May Day 'A Joy' — PL's Ideas Key to Workers' Problems

For the last couple of years I have read CHALLENGE and some of the Party's literature. Even though I agreed with the concept of communism, I was skeptical due to what I had learned from history about communism and its leaders. Since I was angry at society and its misleading ideas, I thought I had to lean towards black nationalism, which I never really agreed with, because I knew it was just another form of racism.

I finally attended my first May Day this year, and I have to say, it was a great experience. The march was great, everybody chanting out of joy and disgust, plus it was great exercise. Mostly joy that it's May Day and disgust because of the capitalist society that we still have to deal with. I've always had my qualms about the government and the injustices that go along with it, long before my friend introduced me to CHALLENGE and the Party. In fact, I was a victim of some of those injustices, so I can definitely identify with the Party's ideas. I've lived in this neighborhood where the march was held my whole life, and I can see the changes due to gentrification and how people are just struggling to live here.

The May Day feast was great, the food was delightful, and the entertainment was very informative. People playing music, reciting poems, acting, speeches, it all had a very positive message to it and was just amazing. I would definitely attend next year. I just like the unity and strength that's involved. Before that, my friend usually had given me issues of CHALLENGE, and that is a gift in itself. It is filled with great information and vast perspectives, and I will definitely continue reading it. I'm also interested in attending study groups to learn more about the Party's analysis on world politics. I also want to learn more of how communism can fix the problems of the working class in an egalitarian society.

Friend of PLP

Bosses Wreck Cultural Revolution

continued from back page

With collective ownership, everybody benefited when the factory did well and everybody suffered when it did poorly. This was no longer true after the factory was privatized. The private owners wanted to increase their profits, which meant they paid workers less and compelled them to work longer hours. Class conflicts emerged that led to resentment and disintegration.

Wang Xuejin, the village factory's secret weapon in the early days, was convinced to work for Zhao in the beginning. Zhao offered to pay him 5,000 yuan a year, a lot of money at the time — nearly ten times more than the average wage. Wang was happy with this arrangement, and worked very hard. But at the end of the year, he discovered that Zhao cleared more than 100,000 yuan in profits from the operation. Under collectivization they'd earned the same number of work points. Now their lives were very different.

Wang complained to Zhao by citing an old saying from Confucius: that people were unhappy not because they were poor, but because others made more than they did. In response, Zhao promised to increase Wang's salary for the following year and also to buy him a new apartment. Wang made a couple thousand more yuan the next year, and another few thousand the year after. But he was no longer happy. And the other workers from the original factory left to set up their own operations, leaving Zhao to hire workers from other areas.

Part Four of this memoir will examine widening inequality in the author's village as Chinese society falls apart after the defeat of the Cultural Revolution.✪

FRANCE



The banners refers to the Imperial Tobacco layoffs (see CHALLENGE, 5/7). Front banner: "Imperial Tobacco is a hit, it is killing employment at la Seita" Rear banner: "No to the closure of la Seita. Valls, have you got the balls to defend us?" Manuel Valls is the French prime minister, he is the son of anti-fascists who fled to France from Spain at the time of the Spanish Civil War (hence "cojones").

CHICAGO



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Slum dwellers battle police violence

NYT, 4/12 — RIO DE JANEIRO — Violent clashes broke out on Friday between police officers and squatters when the authorities dislodged thousands of families for a newly formed favela, or slum…focusing attention on the rising tension over surging rents and housing shortages….

…Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the squatters at a decaying property in the city's gritty northern zone owned by Oi, one of the largest tele communication companies in Brazil.

The squatters fought back by pelting the police with rocks, tossing firebombs and setting buses and police vehicles on fire….

One of the squatters…said she had just put down stakes at the complex just days ago. In a stunning example of how favelas coalesce in Rio, thousands of people had moved to the site this month….

"Five thousand people moved here because they wanted their own home," said Ms. Evangelista, who is unemployed….But this morning police got here when I was still sleeping," she said. "An officer told me he was going to fill my head with bullets…."

…Photographs…showed children suffering from tear gas inhalation….

"The operation unfolded as planned," Lt. Col. Claudio Costa, a spokesman for Rio de Janeiro's military police, said….

Still the images of the clashes brought into sharp relief the discontent over rising costs of living in Rio as it experiences a frenetic investment surge ahead of the World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics, which Rio will…host. Real estate prices and rents have climbed throughout the city, including in many slums, squeezing low-income residents….

…A housing activist working with the squatters… said, "They moved…out of necessity [not] knowing [if] it would work."

Race and class mold education

NYT, 4/22 — To the Editor: A prevailing belief in the United States is that education is the great opportunity equalizer — a silver bullet that can lift kids out of poverty and transform them into productive citizens. Yet the reality of our "make or break" education system is that race and social class largely determine the quality of one's educational life, from pre-K to graduate school.

"Global cities" like New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles boast diverse populations and cultural depth, but their public school systems remain highly segregated….

China aims at military equality

NYT, 4/11 — ULAN BATOR, Mongolia — When Robert Gates visited China in 2011 as the United States defense secretary, the military greeted him with an unexpected and, in the view of American military officials, provocative test of a Chinese stealth fighter jet, a bold show of force that stunned the visiting Americans….

American officials… [have] resolved to project naval power, particularly in light of recent tension between Beijing and its neighbors over disputed islands in the East and South China Seas.

The displays of China's military power reveal some dividends from years of heavy investments, and perhaps a sense that China is now more willing to stand toe-to-toe with the Americans….

Impartial justice? Don't bet on it

NYT, 4/12 — Two days after he was shot, Andre Daly woke in a haze with a police officer standing by his hospital bed in Brooklyn.

"I'm thinking he's going to talk about the incident that happened to me — how I got shot," Mr. Daly, 29, recalled. But the officer was not there to interview Mr. Daly. He had come to arrest him over an unpaid summons.

"He's telling me now I am a prisoner of New York City because I have a warrant owing," Mr. Daly said.

Mr. Daly spent more than a week immobilized, not just by his three bullet wounds, but also by a set of handcuffs and ankle restraints — all because of an unpaid $25 fine for possessing a cup of wine in public.

What happened to Mr. Daly in December was no fluke. The New York Police Department performs various checks….If an outstanding warrant is found, the police generally…shackle the victim, often for [a] whole hospital stay, no matter how minor the underlying offense or how grievous the injuries.

"That's the procedure," the department's chief spokesman, Stephan Davis, said….

Tasers treat students like criminals

NYT, 4/12 — Federal investigators have opened an inquiry into the tragic case of a high school student in Bastrop County, Texas, who suffered brain injuries and nearly died last fall after a deputy sheriff shocked him with a Taser, a high voltage electronic weapon.

In North Carolina, civil rights lawyers have filed a complaint with the Justice Department, charging the Wake County school system with violating the constitutional rights of minority children by subjecting them to discriminatory arrest practices and brutality by police officers assigned to schools. In one nightmarish case described in the complaint, a disabled 15-year-old was shocked with a Taser three times during an interrogation at school, resulting in punctured lungs. And in New York, civil rights lawyers have sued the city of Syracuse on behalf of two students. One was shocked three times, not for threatening behavior but for lying on the floor and crying, they say, and another was shocked while trying to break up a fight.

Complaints about dangerous disciplinary practices involving shock weapons are cropping up all over the country….practices that criminalize far too many young people and that are applied in ways that discriminate against minority children….

The Taser…uses a powerful electrical charge to create intense spasms that drive suspect to the ground….A growing body of research shows how lethal these weapons can be…

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

China's Capitalist Roaders Wreck Proletarian Cultural Revolution

In 1966, at the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the Progressive Labor Party was one year old. Our Chinese comrades influenced our political line and inspired our work. They showed us the critical importance of breaking with revisionism — the fake-leftist ideology, put forward by "capitalist roaders," that actually serves the bosses. They taught us about the power of the collective and of leadership that comes from the masses, and the need to rely on workers over elite experts and technocrats. The Chinese comrades' experience also underlined the danger of keeping remnants of capitalism — like money and wages — in a worker-run state, and how these elements pave the way for the return of full-blown capitalism.

The first two parts of this first-person account of the Cultural Revolution told the story of a village factory and the author's evolution from high school student to factory manager. He left his village in 1978 to attend a teachers college. By the following year, he would find it much changed.

'I Missed the Village Life'

In July the college closed for summer vacation, and I came back home. The train stopped at Qingdao, but there was no bus to my hometown. I went to the Qingdao steel factory, where my former colleagues were assembling the cranes. Guan Dunyan, my predecessor as factory manager, was excited to see me, and asked one of the workers to carry me back home on his bike. It was Huang Jianguo, the worker who'd designed the tractor cabs.

On the way to the village, Huang objected to the accent I'd acquired at college — I hadn't even been aware of it. He warned me to change back, which proved not to be difficult. Once I was back with my friends in the village, I spoke like them again.

I visited Wang Xuejin and we talked about conditions in the factory and my successor, Guan Dunxiao. The son of a former landlord, Guan was also one of the two first high school graduates in the village. I also visited Zhao Licheng, the party leader who'd insisted that I run for factory manager and made sure I was honored as standard bearer four years in a row. He said that he really missed me. I missed him as well — I missed village life.

After the summer, back in college, I heard that Deng Xiaoping's government was breaking up the collectives. Farmers would be given a piece of land to farm on their own. Collective assets, including the factories, would be broken up as well to give people more incentive to work hard. I immediately realized this was a terrible mistake.

'Defend the Collective'

By late January, 1979, when I came back to the village for winter break, the collective land was already broken into individual lots. Anyone who refused to carry out this policy — including all seventeen of the Party's county secretaries in Yantai Prefecture — was summarily removed from office by Deng's government. The new leaders, appointed by the central government, forced the breakup of the collective down the people's throats.

Zhang Fugui — model farmer, party secretary of Xia Dingjia village, and a member of Shandong Provincial Party Committee — yelled through the village loudspeaker that as long as he was alive, collective assets in the village would be defended and the collective would stay intact. But he was removed from office and taken away from his village. He was taken by surprise by the comeback of the capitalist roaders.

Millions of people like Zhang were purged from the Party, and many wound up in prison for twenty years or life. The struggle between the two camps inside the Chinese Communist Party was not a mere difference of opinion — it was a struggle of life and death. Deng Xiaoping was ruthless, like Jiang Jieshi's brutal regime during the civil war.

In my village, land was laid to waste because farming did not make enough money. The collective had farmed because people needed to be fed, and combined the income of the farming section with that of the collective-owned industry. Now that the factory workers were given individual pieces of land, they had no time to take care of it because of their factory work. Meanwhile, the farmers now needed to make more money and looked for side employment. As a result, they failed to take care of their plots.

The village factory was privatized as well. Zhao Licheng bought equipment from the village and took some people with him to set up his own factory. Guan Dunxiao did the same.

What held the village factory together was the spirit of equality among the workers under collectivization.

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Mass Strikes Hit China's Nike Exploiters



DONGGUAN, CHINA, April 30 — On April 15, one of the largest strikes in this country's private sector saw 45,000 workers, mostly women, shut down Yue Yuen, the world's largest manufacturer of sneakers and footwear. The company produces 300 million pairs for Nike, Adidas, Puma, New Balance, Reebok and Timberland, among others. Yue Yuen, a $5.6 billion conglomerate, employs 423,000 workers.

Riot police played their usual strike-breaking role. They detained rank-and-file leaders and arrested scores of workers, forcing them back inside the factories. When once inside, those workers refused to work, and then were beaten for "not working." One worker told Agence France-Presse (4/28) that "the factory is controlled by police." A 17-year-old who earns around $500 a month working on Nike Air Jordans said she went back because she feared losing her job, saying, "Factory officials have warned us that those who make a fuss will be sacked without compensation." A 45-year-old sanitation worker surnamed Li added, "The government is forcing us back to work."

Massive crowds surrounding factory buildings carried banners reading, "Give me back my social insurance, give me back my housing benefits!"

The grassroots uprising was led by workers approaching retirement. They reported that the company had fallen way behind on payments for pensions, housing funds, unemployment and medical insurance — social welfare benefits which are supposedly mandated by Chinese law. "If you don't have social security, your life's work will be useless when you return home," said Li, who, like nearly all the factory's workers, comes from a poor rural village to which he plans one day to return.

The strikers were focusing on what will happen if many of the companies move elsewhere. Nike and Adidas have begun shifting operations to lower-wage areas like Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Carrot and Stick: Bosses Promise, Cops Attack

As the strike continued, the bosses promised some retroactive payments to the state-mandated social insurance and housing funds, but one worker, Xiang Feng, 28, told Bloomberg News, "Workers may end up with a take-home salary almost unchanged or maybe even lower than before." Many are demanding a 30 percent pay hike, saying that their wages can't keep up with the rising cost of living. As of today, most of the strikers have returned to work based on the "carrot-and-stick" concept: company promises and police action.

How much longer this struggle will continue and what the workers may win remains to be seen. But one thing is certain: the betrayal of China's revolution is blatantly revealed in the actions of its leaders in keeping tens of millions of workers in near slavery. While passing labor reform laws, they flagrantly ignore them as they use the state apparatus to break this strike.

Millions of workers and peasants still remember being freed from some of the oppression of the pre-revolutionary days. Now that the present traitors to that revolution have reinstituted full-blown capitalism, fertile ground exists for the emergence of a true communist party that would learn from past errors — that there is no such thing as a "two-stage" revolution, that socialism only brings workers back to capitalism.

One of the lessons of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is that our class must be won directly to communism, a society without a wage system, without bosses, without profits, without money — a society run by and for the workers, governed by workers' state power. This is the goal of the Progressive Labor Party. Our fight is international and can eventually help the emergence of such a party throughout the world.✪